

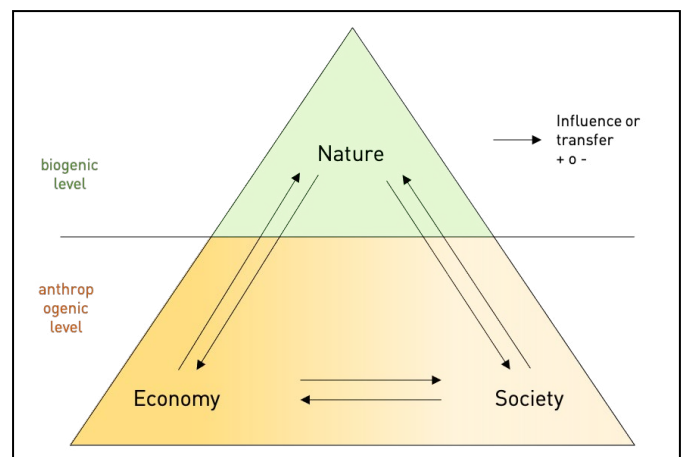


Destination Development

Project 2.1 Sustainability and Brand Identity of South Tyrol

In its second research focus, the Competence Centre has dedicated projects to the topics sustainability and sustainable tourism in South Tyrol. Consumers' understanding of the term and concept of sustainability, their attitude towards sustainable tourism and their perception of sustainability play an important role. Two studies in Germany/Italy and in Norway/USA uncovered the understanding of sustainability and sustainable tourism from the consumers' point of view. The first study aimed to determine Germans' and Italians' understanding of sustainability and sustainable tourism. It was conducted in December 2019, with 87 participants from Germany and 69 participants from Italy. One year later, the second study asked 120 US Americans and 85 Norwegians about their understanding of sustainability and sustainable tourism. Results show that most consumers have a vague and incomplete understanding of the term sustainability. Moreover, the understanding is very individual. The definition of the interaction of economy, society (socio-cultural dimension) and ecology described by experts and in the literature is rarely found among consumers in this holistic form. Instead, it becomes apparent that many consumers place a strong focus on environmental and nature conservation aspects, while social or economic aspects are often missing or rarely addressed.

Research area: Destination Development
Project name: Sustainability and Brand Identity of South Tyrol
Duration: 2019–2022
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The cultural differences are particularly striking. Compared to Germans, Italians and Norwegians, many US Americans seem to have a somewhat different understanding of the concepts: among other things they often understand sustainability as personal financial independence or the ability to make a living in the long term. The respondents found it even more difficult to describe the concept of sustainable tourism. Here, the respondents mainly used symbolic elements, such as an environmentally friendly journey or regional food and beverages. Again, intercultural differences with the USA became apparent. Interviewed US Americans stated that sustainable tourism businesses distinguish themselves by operating profitably in the long term and offering customers an attractive product. The resulting management implications are now discussed with IDM South Tyrol. The project was also presented at the international Consumer Behaviour in Tourism Symposium in December 2020.



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